

Mushroom Potato Crema with Roasted Poblano, Corn & Manchego

Adapted from a Rick Bayless recipe



4 medium Yukon Gold potatoes (about 1 pound total) cut into roughly 1-inch pieces, or thin-skinned red potatoes

1 pound celery root, peeled, cut in 1" chunks

3 whole garlic cloves, peeled and halved

6 cups chicken broth, or vegetable broth

2 teaspoons mushroom base, Custom Culinary "Mushroom Base" or other chicken soup base (paste)

1 large poblano pepper

8 ounces mushrooms, sliced 1/4-inch thick, about 3 cups

1 cup corn kernels, fresh or frozen

1 teaspoon dried thyme

1/4 cup heavy cream

Salt to taste

Bratwurst sausage (optional) cut into small bite-sized pieces

1 1/2 cups Manchego cheese, grated

1/4 cup cilantro, chopped, for garnish

2-3 slices bacon, chopped, fried, drained (for garnish - optional)

Servings: 4

1. Add the potatoes, celery root and garlic to a medium (3-quart) saucepan, pour in half of the broth and set over high heat. When the liquid boils, reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer briskly until the vegetables are tender, about 15 minutes.

2. While they are cooking, roast the poblano - core the pepper, cut into 3 pieces on the flat sides, and broil 4 inches below the element, turning regularly until blistered and blackened all over, about 10 minutes. Cover with foil and allow to cool. With your fingers, rub the blackened skin off the chiles. Cut into 1/4-inch pieces.

3. When the potatoes and celery root are tender, use an immersion blender to puree the soup base (or use stand blender) and return to the pan. Add the remaining broth, mushrooms, poblano, corn and thyme. Simmer 10 minutes over medium heat.

4. Add cream, then taste and season with salt. Add optional items if using and grated cheese. Stir and heat through. Ladle the soup into bowls and sprinkle with cilantro.

5. Notes: optional versions - though the original soup is vegetarian when made with vegetable broth, it doesn't have to be. Ham, ham hocks, bacon and chorizo are all wonderful in this soup—start with about 4 ounces. As is crab. The corn can be easily replaced by other vegetables that offer a contrast in taste and texture: small fresh fava beans, peas, 1-inch lengths of green beans. Use about the same volume measure. Can also be made with half potatoes and half parsnips or young turnips, or rutabaga. For the adventuresome: use bacon drippings to sauté a heaping cup of cubed cleaned nopal cactus pieces until all their liquid has evaporated; add them, with the bacon, just before serving.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 544 Calories; 30g Fat (49.2% calories from fat); 36g Protein; 35g Carbohydrate; 5g Dietary Fiber; 84mg Cholesterol; 1775mg Sodium. Exchanges: 1/2 Grain(Starch); 1/2 Lean Meat; 1 1/2 Vegetable; 0 Non-Fat Milk; 1 Fat.

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